

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

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FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 601

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: RAMAY INDICTS PPP FAILURES - DAVID VS. GOLIATH?

REF: LAHORE 1134

1. SUMMARY: IN STRIKINGLY OUTSPOKEN PRESS CONFERENCE IN LAHORE SEPTEMBER 30, FORMER PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER (NOW SENATOR) RAMAY DELIVERED FAR-RANGING INDICTMENT OF ILLS AND FAILURES OF PAKISTAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (PPP), OF WHICH HE REMAINS IMPORTANT LEADER, AIMING POINTED CRITICISM AT PARTY CHAIRMAN BHUTTO. DEPLORING ABSENCE OF FREE "POLITICAL PROCESS" WITHIN PARTY, RAMAY PROPOSED REMEDIAL ACTION INCLUDING CONVENING OF PPP "FOUNDER CENTRAL COMMITTEE," IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTY'S SOCIALIST MANIFESTO AND DEMOCRATIC RE-ORGANIZATION OF PPP. SIGNIFICANTLY, STORY WAS BLACKED-OUT FROM GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED PRESS OCTOBER 1, CARRIED IN FULLY BY ONE ONE LOCAL INDEPENDENT VERNACULAR PAPER. RAMAY, ONE OF MOST CONSCIENTIOUS

LEADERS OF PPP SOCIALIST WING, IS EVIDENTLY CAPITALIZING ON CURRENT PARTY CRISIS IN PUNJAB (OVER DEFECTION OF KHAR GROUP) TO SEEK DEMOCRATIZATION OF PPP AND RENEWED PURSUIT OF SOCIALIST GOALS, WITH NEW EMPHASIS

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ON PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY. END SUMMARYGK

2. FORMER PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER (NOW SENATOR) MUHAMMAD HANEEF RAMAY, IN ANXIOUSLY-AWAITED PRESS CONFERENCE AT LAHORE RESIDENCE SEP SEPTEMBER 30, DELIVERED FAR-RANGING INDICTMENT OF ILLS AND FAILURES OF PPP AS PRESENTLY FUNCTIONING UNDER CHAIRMAN BHUTTO AND SECY GEN MUBASHIR HASSAN, SPEAKING HIS MIND UNEQUIVOCALLY, IN CONTEXT OF RECENT DEFECTION OF KHAR GROUP FROM PPP, RAMAY DEPLORED LACK OF FREE "POLITICAL PROCESS" WITHIN PARTY AND CALLED FOR REMEDIAL ACTION BEFORE PPP MOVES FARTHER DOWN ROAD TO DISINTEGRATION.

3. SIGNIFICANTLY (IN TERMS OF GOVERNMENT'S SENSITIVITY TO PUBLIC CRITICISM), RAMAY'S REMARKS WERE COVERED FULLY IN ONLY ONE LOCAL NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 1: INDEPENDENT VERNACULAR NAWA-I-WAQT, WHICH DEVOTED 72 COLUMN INCHES TO STORY. VERNACULAR DAILIES WFAQ AND MAGHRIBI PAKISTAN, GENERALLY PRO-PPP WITH INDEPENDENT LEANINGS, CARRIED SUMMARIES OF HIGHLIGHTS. OTHERWISE STORY WAS COMPLETELY BLACKED-OUT FROM GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED NEWS MEDIA. FOLLOWING SUMMARY IS BASED ON CONGEN TRANSLATION OF NAWA-I-WAQT REPORT.

4. IN LEAD PARAGRAPHS, STORY CITED FOLLOWING AS RAMAY'S SALIENT POINTS:

(A) "FOUNDER CENTRAL COMMITTEE" OF PPP SHOULD BE CONVENED WITHIN 15 DAYS "TO DEBATE CHAOS PREVAILING IN RULING PARTY." FOUNDER MEMBERS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE WHO, FOR ONE REASON OR OTHER, HAVE QUIT PARTY SHOULD BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN MEETING -- INCLUDING FORMER PUNJAB GOVERNOR KHAR, MERAJ MUHAMMAD KHAN (RADICAL LEFTIST NOW IN JAIL), FORMER PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL J.A. RAHIM, EX-CENTRAL MINISTERS KHURSHID HASSAN MEER AND MAHMUD ALI KASURI (NOW TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL LEADER), AND FORMER SIND PPP CHAIRMAN MIR RASUL BUX TALPUR.

(B) WHITE PAPER CONCERNING "FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT SOCIALIST ECONOMY ACCORDING TO PPP MANIFESTO" SHOULD BE PREPARED AND PUBLISHED.

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(C) "AUTONOMY SHOULD BE GRANTED TO ALL PROVINCES" AS GUARANTEED BY NATION'S CONSTITUTION.

(D) "ALLEGED CONSPIRACY TO DIVIDE PUNJAB" SHOULD BE "EFFECTIVELY CHECKED."

(E) LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES SHOULD BE ELECTED UNDER

LEGISLATION ALREADY ENACTED (BY PUNJAB ASSEMBLY).

(F) PPP SHOULD BE RE-ORGANIZED AND OFFICIALS ELECTED
AT ALL LEVELS.

(G) CAMPAIGN SHOULD BE LAUNCHED TO RECRUIT AND TRAIN
PARTY WORKERS FOR NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS.

(H) "POLITICAL AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESS... WHICH HAS BEEN
OBSTRUCTED TIME AND AGAIN" SHOULD BE RESTORED, AND "ATTEMPTS
TO CHOKER VOICE OF ANY PERSON SEEKING TO HAVE THIS POLITICAL
PROCESS CONTINUE" SHOULD CEASE.

5. IN SUBSEQUENT NARRATIVE, NAWA-I-WAQT UNDER SUB-HEAD
"THE REAL ISSUE" QUOTED RAMAY AS OBSERVING THAT CONTROVERSIAL
PENDING BY-ELECTION FOR PUNJAB ASSEMBLY SEAT FROM LAHORE,
RECENTLY VACATED BY HIM, WAS SIGNIFICANT BUT NOT THE BASIC
ISSUE. IT WAS MERELY "SYMBOL OF PROBLEMS CONFRONTING US."
MORE FUNDAMENTAL WAS FACT THAT PPP, BECAUSE OF "PECULIAR
POSITION IN NATIONAL POLITICAL LIFE," MUST "UNITE, ORGANIZE
AND MARCH FORWARD WITH CLEAR-CUT MANIFESTO." OTHERWISE

PPP WOULD FRAGMENT AND "OPPOSITION WOULD ARISE FROM INSIDE
PARTY."

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6. AS PPP CURRENTLY OPERATES, RAMAY CONTINUED, THERE IS "NO PLATFORM ON WHICH ONE CAN SPEAK HIS MIND FREELY AND EXPRESS HIS SORROWS AND PAINS." THEREFORE HE HAD DECIDED TO SPEAK OUT, OR "SOMEONE WOULD RAISE SLOGANS NOT BASED ON REASON AND PEOPLE MIGHT FOLLOW HIM" (VEILED REFERENCE TO KHAR). RAMAY SAID HE WAS TAKING HIS CASE TO PUBLIC PRESS AS HE HAD RECEIVED NO REPLY TO SEPTEMBER 22 LETTER OF COMPLAINT TO CHAIRMAN BHUTTO.

7. REGARDING HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD KHAR, RAMAY SAID THEIR RECENT CONFLICT HAD BEEN CONSTITUTIONAL, NOT PERSONAL, AND THERE WAS NOW NO REASON FOR IT TO CONTINUE. HOWEVER, IT WAS UNTRUE AS RUMORED THAT THEY WERE COLLABORATING POLITICALLY. "HE BELONGS TO ONE CLASS AND I TO ANOTHER; HE HAS QUIT PARTY WHILE I STILL BELONG."

8. FOCUSING ATTENTION ON ISSUE OF PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY, RAMAY ARGUED IT WAS EMBODIED IN NATION'S CONSTITUTION AND FEDERAL SYSTEM, SO ITS ADVOCACY SHOULD NOT BE BRANDED DISLOYAL. HE DEMANDED PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY FOR ALL PROVINCES, NOT JUST PUNJAB, AS "A POINT OF UNITY AND COMMON PLATFORM." PAKISTAN CAN CONTINUE TO EXIST, HE ASSERTED, "ONLY BY FORMING FEDERATION OF PROVINCES AND ALLOWING UNITS TO EXERCISE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY GUARANTEED BY CONSTITUTION."

9. ON PERSONAL NOTE, COUNTERING ALLEGATIONS HE WAS APPLYING "PRESSURE TACTICS" TO SECURE FEDERAL MINISTERSHIP, RAMAY DISPLAYED JULY 2 LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO OFFERING HIM IMPORTANT CENTRAL MINISTRY. HE THEN ASSERTED HE DID NOT DESIRE POWER AND DID NOT WISH BECOME EITHER CHIEF MINISTER AGAIN, OR CENTRAL MINISTER. ALL HE WANTED WAS "TO DO SOMETHING TO MOVE PARTY ALONG RIGHT PATH IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROMISES MADE TO PEOPLE." HE ALSO DISCLOSED THAT HIS ASSOCIATES .K. KHAKWANI, RAJA MUNAWWAR AHMAD AND SARDAR SAGHIR AHMAD (ALL PRESENT ALONG WITH OTHER IMPORTANT SUPPORTERS) HAD RECENTLY DECLINED PROVINCIAL MINISTERSHIPS, FOR SAME PRINCIPLE. (KHAKWANI TOLD US AS MUCH SEPTEMBER 14.)

10. RECALLING 1970 CAMPAIGN SLOGAN "THE PEOPLE ARE SOURCE OF ALL POWER," RAMAY PLEADED FOR EARLY ELECTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES UNDER EXISTING LEGISLATION "SO DEMOCRACY CAN REACH TO EVERY LEVEL." REGRETTING THAT PPP OFFICIALS WERE STILL BEING "NOMINATED BY THOSE NOT ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OR PARTY," RAMAY ALSO ADVOCATED ELECTION OF PPP OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS. CHARGING THAT BY-ELECTIONS WERE BEING "MANAGED ON ADMINISTRATIVE BASIS," HE URGED ELECTIONS HENCEFORTH BE CONDUCTED "FREELY AND FAIRLY,"

INCLUDING UPCOMING LAHORE BY-ELECTION.

11. FINALLY, TOUCHING ON EXPRESSED FEARS OF "PRE-PLANNED SCHEME TO DIVIDE PUNJAB ALONG GEOGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL LINES," RAMAY OPPOSED ANY THOUGHT TO CREATION OF SEPARATED "BAHAWALPUR, SERAIKI, POTOHAR OR OTHER PROVINCES" DUE TO LINGUISTIC "FACTIONALISM." HE ADDED "PUNJAB IN FACT IS BODY OF PAKISTAN IN WHICH COUNTRY'S HEART THROBS; IF YOU CUT THE HEART YOU CUT PAKISTAN."

12. COMMENT: THIS CATEGORIC INDICTMENT OF PREVAILING LACK OF DEMOCRATIC FORMS AND PROCESSES WITHIN PPP IS STRONGEST PUBLIC CRITICISM WE RECALL EVER HAVING HEARD FROM PARTY LEADER TO HIS COLLEAGUES. IN VIEW OF RAMAY'S KNOWN DISSATISFACTION WITH CURRENT CONDUCT OF PARTY AFFAIRS, AND HIS DESIRE TO PUT PPP BACK ON TRACK TO SOCIALISM, WE EXPECTED SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT FROM HIM, BUT NOTHING SO PROVOCATIVE. RAMAY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EVIDENTLY HAS DECIDED TO DRAW THE LINE NOW, CAPITALIZING ON CURRENT PARTY CRISIS IN PUNJAB (REFTEL) TO MAKE PERSONAL BID FOR DEMOCRATIZATION OF PPP AND RENEWAL OF SOCIALIST PROGRAM. HIS STRONG ADVOCACY OF PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY FOR PUNJAB CONSTITUTES STRIKING NEW DIMENSION WHICH IS BOUND TO PRECIPITATE BITTER DEBATE WITHIN PARTY AND THROUGHOUT COUNTRY, WITH FAR-REACHING POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. WHILE RAMAY ASSERTEDLY REMAINS WITHIN PPP FOLD AND SPEAKS FOR SMALL BUT IMPORTANT LIBERAL FACTION DISCONTENTED WITH ASPECT OF CHAIRMAN BHUTTO'S LEADERSHIP, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN -- PROBABLY SOONER RATHER THAN LATER -- WHETHER HIS CRITICISM WILL SERVE AS CATALYST FOR REFORM, OR GROUNDS FOR RUSTICATION. SPENGLER

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